

South Dakota National Guard
Public Affairs Office
2823 West Main St.
Rapid City, S.D. 57702

Phone 605-737-6721
E-mail PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil

Nov. 21, 2008
PAO 11-21A-08

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

STARBASE graduates its 200th class

By Roger C. Anderson
Information Officer

RAPID CITY – Like rockets blasting into the sky, elementary students in the Rapid City area are getting high on science, math and technology while attending classes at western South Dakota's STARBASE.

Well into its seventh year, the unique educational program at Camp Rapid reached a milestone in November with the graduation of its 200th class, a fourth-grade class from Douglas' Vanderberg Elementary.

Since its origin in fall of 2002 about 4,500 fourth graders have taken the challenge to broaden their interest in technology.

"The coolest thing about STARBASE is that it works," said Sarah Jensen, program director. "We show them that science, math and technology can be fun and exciting."

Funded by the Department of Defense, the STARBASE goal is to raise interest and improve students' knowledge and skills by exposing them to a technological environment and positive role models found on military bases.

The students attend one, five-hour class each week for five weeks studying subjects like Newton's laws of motion, the four forces of flight and the physics describing lift on an aircraft's wing known as Bernoulli's Principle.

That may sound a bit complicated for fourth graders, but they seem to be excited and it's easy to see why.

With that background, students build and fire their own rockets and even get behind the controls of STARBASE's 30 flight simulators to learn how to fly airplanes. They learn the functions of the altimeter, airspeed indicator, artificial horizon (altitude indicator) and heading indicator, as well as, the use of the ailerons, rudder, flaps, and elevator.

And from the start, the kids and teachers use call-signs like Maverick, Apollo or Aquarius, instead of their real names.

Jensen says the biggest feedback comes from the parents who ask their child “what you learned in STARBASE today?”

“I don’t think the parents are quite prepared for the answer, the kids will talk about it for hours,” said Jensen.

Other topics include space exploration, goal setting, teamwork, and the importance in avoiding substance abuse. Everything comes together in the fourth week, when student take a field trip to Ellsworth Air Force Base and the Army National Guard’s Aviation Support Facility at the airport.

“Seeing a B-1 Bomber up close, flying the B-1 simulator and sitting behind the controls of a Blackhawk helicopter are real motivators for kids,” Jensen added. “We impact students daily and with 60 other sites throughout the nation - we are affecting 50-60 thousands kids each year. That is impressive!”

The STARBASE course is currently offered to students from the Rapid City Area Schools and Douglas Schools. A group of home-school children and one class from Zion Lutheran also attend. One STARBASE session is planned for this next summer for military kids along with an advanced computer-aided drafting class.

The STARBASE staff includes Jensen and two other teachers, each with current South Dakota teaching certificates. Each school class brings its teacher who gets quite involved throughout the course.

“I’m more than willing to accept volunteer help,” said Jensen. “We really could use more help as we are also working to become a pilot site for STARBASE Constellations, a middle school mentoring program.”

Photo Cut Line:



081028-A-5524A-001: RAPID CITY, S.D. - A fourth grader from Vanderberg Elementary prepares his rocket for flight on Oct. 28, 2008, at Camp Rapid during the 200th class of STARBASE. Funded by the Department of Defense, the STARBASE goal is to raise interest and improve students' knowledge and skills by exposing them to a technological environment and positive role models found on military bases. The students attend one, five-hour class each week for five weeks studying subjects like Newton's laws of motion, the four forces of flight and the physics describing lift on an aircraft's wing known as Bernoulli's Principle. (Army photo by Roger C. Anderson)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/081028-A-5524A-001.jpg>



081028-A-5524A-002: RAPID CITY, S.D. - Fourth graders from Vanderberg Elementary prepare their rocket for flight on Oct. 28, 2008, at Camp Rapid during the 200th class of STARBASE. Funded by the Department of Defense, the STARBASE goal is to raise interest and improve students' knowledge and skills by exposing them to a technological environment and positive role models found on military bases. The students attend one, five-hour class each week for five weeks studying subjects like Newton's laws of motion, the four forces of flight and the physics describing lift on an aircraft's wing known as Bernoulli's Principle. (Army photo by Roger C. Anderson)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/081028-A-5524A-002.jpg>